

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-40 are presently active in this case, Claims 1, 2, 5, 12, 13, 16-18, and 20-22 having been amended, Claims 8 and 19 canceled, and Claims 23-40 added by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Official Action, Claims 1-5, 11-16, and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Akihiko (JP 2000-098968); Claims 6-7 and 17-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Akihiko in view of Santelmann (US Patent No. 5,394,067); and Claims 8-10, 19-21 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were otherwise indicated as including allowable subject matter if rewritten in independent form.

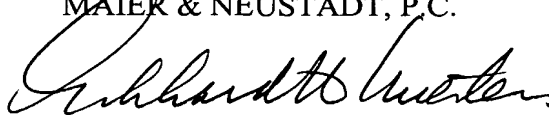
Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter. In light of this indication, Claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of allowable Claim 8 and Claim 8 has been canceled. Claim 12 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of Claim 19, and Claim 19 has been canceled. New Claim 23 including the subject matter of original Claim 1 and allowable Claim 9 has been added. New dependent Claims 24-31 corresponding to original Claims 2-7 and 10-11, respectively, have been added. New Claim 32 including the subject matter of original Claim 12 and allowable Claim 20 has been added. New dependent Claims 33-40 corresponding to original Claims 13-18 and 21-22, respectively, have been added. Furthermore, minor informalities uncovered in the claims have been corrected. No new matter has been added.

Accordingly, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above comments, only claims including subject matter indicated as being allowable are pending and no issues

are outstanding. Consequently, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Eckhard H. Kuesters
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 28,870

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 06/04)

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